



# CALVARY COURIER

Jan-Feb 2010

## Letter from the Pastor

I don't really understand the calendar that we use. For example, I understand that winter begins on the shortest day of the year and summer begins on the longest, but I think that winter should start in November, at least by Thanksgiving when it starts to get cold. Spring should start around March first when the snow starts melting. Summer ought to begin when school lets out and autumn when the leaves start to turn.

Our current calendar actually dates back to Julius Caesar's commissioning of an Egyptian Sosigenes to establish a consistent way of tracking the years. July was named after Julius and August, after his eventual successor, Caesar Augustus.

The Jewish version dates all the way back to Adam and Eve, 5770 ago, by their reckoning. Their new year starts on September 8<sup>th</sup> this year.

What I am trying to illustrate is that it seems a bit silly for folks to get all excited and/or inebriated on a certain day that has been designated by an commissioned Alexandrian over 2000 years ago. People make resolutions that they should have taken care of months or years ago, and somehow feel better about them selves for finally getting around to saying that they will do something about a particular problem in their lives. If this issue really was a problem, isn't it silly to wait for "New Year's Day" to do something about it. "I should have quit smoking years ago, but now, I will make the pledge of words to finally quit, I hope."

The idea of "resolutions" connotes the idea of repentance. "I have been (or not been) doing "A" and need to change my behavior." Again, why wait for a special day to make the needed modification? Is this not merely a delaying tactic to avoid the desired metamorphosis altogether? For example: "In the new year, I will no longer beat my wife!" I feel better for having said it, but if I am sincere in my verbiage, I would not need a New Year's resolution because I would have already stopped my cruelty altogether, having seen it as something to repent of.

Repentance is something that does not allow waiting. If I say that on such and such a day, I will stop stealing Snickers bars, I have no real intent on ever stopping my theft. I do not see it as evil enough to cease the behavior at this particular moment; therefore, I do not really understand the activity as being evil. This is like saying that chlorine gas is not all that poisonous so I shall wait to get out for the fumes for a few days. "It is toxic! Run!" is the correct response. Being engaged for 5 years is saying that you really don't want to get married. Procrastination about homework states that you have no interest in learning about the particular subject. The examples are endless.

**Steve Hugo** has been the Pastor of Calvary Church since 2002. He has been "in the ministry" since 1980 in various roles, including youth, music, and solo pastoral positions.

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Pastoral Studies graduate  
of Moody Bible Institute  
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Jesus' "Follow me" imperatives show this very well. Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

There was no opportunity for thinking the command through, just the opportunity at that particular moment to obey to clear command to leave the known for the unknown. They needed to repent then and there. Hesitation would only reveal that they did not think that they needed to change, that they were fine just the way that they had always been, that their life direction was adequate. (This is not to say that their career was sinful in the least, but it would have been sinful to not obey, stating that they did not indeed need to follow Jesus.)

Matthew 8:21

Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." The disciple's father was not lying there dead before them, but rather the appeal was that he should follow Jesus after his father passed on. This could have been a matter of weeks and more likely one of

years. "Jesus, I cannot follow you yet seeing that something more important is going on in my life at the moment."

Levi had it figured out. Luke 5:27-8

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

The time to turn to Christ is always now. To wait is to be an idolater, to place something or someone else in the object-of-personal-pursuit category other than God. Would you dare to tell your fiancé to wait for marriage because you wanted to date another for a while, and get married when you were through? It is not that God is narcissistic, but rather that by design, we were meant to be in fellowship with Him as the source of our being. He had no desire to create and then be uninvolved with his creation.

Sin has entered the equation of life and wrecked it. It must be turned from now, otherwise there is really no intent to turn from it, but merely an attempt to

think better of yourself for the thought of turning. Thinking has utterly no redemptive value.

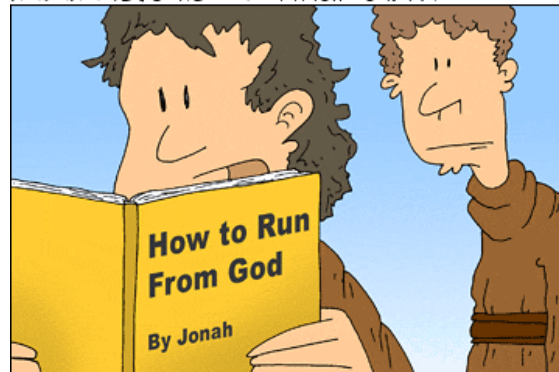
If you need to come to Christ, do it now. "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2) To wait is to decide against Him.

If you are a believer and are caught in a particular sin, now is the time to turn from it, not in 5 minutes, now! If you need help in the turning call someone and enlist their aid, but only someone that you can trust. (We have made the cost of confession far too high, as we are prone to punish the confessor rather than seek his restoration. That is another article altogether.)

If we confess that are followers of Christ, then by all means, let us be on that ever refining path of actually following him beyond the lip service that can sooth our consciences for a moment, but never the Spirit. Be repenting of anything of the world that keeps you from following Christ with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. Violate the self-will and be doing what it takes to actually follow Jesus.

--Pastor Steve

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Thanks to Richard Germain (See Jonah 1-4)

09-19-2008

IT JUST SAYS "DON'T"

## MISSIONS NEWS

o From the **Gretschmanns**: Three days before expiration, they were able to finalize residence papers. Praise! They can remain two more years. Please pray for Susana's complete recovery from viral infection. They write: "As we look to the new year of 2010 we see new opportunities ahead of us - reaching people with the Gospel making more disciples. Pray with us as we seek to rescue souls for His kingdom & see His church built & established here in Fuengirola. We are grateful to each of you for your faithfulness in prayer & financial investments. May the Lord richly bless you for your sacrifice of love to people here in Spain."

o The **Griffins** send warm holiday greetings to everyone at Calvary. They send some updates for several people they asked us to pray for: Anny, a college student, had distanced herself from church and Christian friends. Recently she accepted some Christian books and attended the church's Christmas dinner. Pastor Antonio had developed brain cancer - went to Cuba for risky surgery - cancer shrunk and surgery is unnecessary. "Please pray for continued health as he resumes pastoral ministry." Christian, a 15-year old, recently began attending Sunday school and worship services. "Please remember him and his family in prayer." Maria has had four heart attacks - she is getting stronger but has kept Gospel at a distance. "Thank you so much for joining us in ministry here."

o **Jim and Jennifer** ask us to "pray for funding to complete the well in Duduya. There are two outreaches planned to the Moors in early 2010. Please start to pray for the missionaries coming, and a team of Chinese coming in February with a probable emphasis on medical work." Letter on the board!

o Please pray for **Mark and Nancy** in Ecuador: Their ministry account income has fallen almost 30 percent. Their ECUA-MARKS - Renewing God's Grace in 2009 is on the board. Lots of photos included!

o From **Brian and Tita**: Please continue praying for Roger and Virginia and their extended family. Roger is limited physically and mentally due to a stroke. Brian has been visiting them weekly for Bible study since November 15. He writes: "Family misunderstandings seem to have disappeared. Roger made a special effort to visit, to forgive and to be reconciled with neighbors... Thanks for praying and participating. Please don't stop."

o Calvary family looks forward to a visit with **Rick and Susan** on January 10! Susan passed her final comprehensive exams; then finished all the requirements for her MA in Intercultural Studies and graduated with honors from Wheaton Graduate School. Rick began full-time "partnership development" in November to seek more sharing opportunities and additional regular prayer and financial support. Susan joined him in this effort on January 2.

Kris plans to move to Seattle and seek some employment there. Michael is considering what he might do for ministry at church and how to get more work hours. David finished his first trimester of second year at Baker College in Muskegon and is looking at other schools in Michigan to transfer to in fall to finish his Bachelor's degree.

## COMING EVENTS

### January 10

Visit with the Nivens  
Potluck lunch

### January 16

7:00pm – FFH and Newfire  
Live in Concert at Moraine  
Valley Church.  
\$18 Artist Circle  
\$12 gen admission (\$15 at door)  
\$10 groups of 15+.  
For tickets - 800-965-9324

### January 24

Pack the House Sunday

### January 26

7:00pm – Board Meeting  
at Panera in Matteson

### February 20

Valentine's Day Party